SURFER



Torrey Meister, Western Australia. Photo by Glaser

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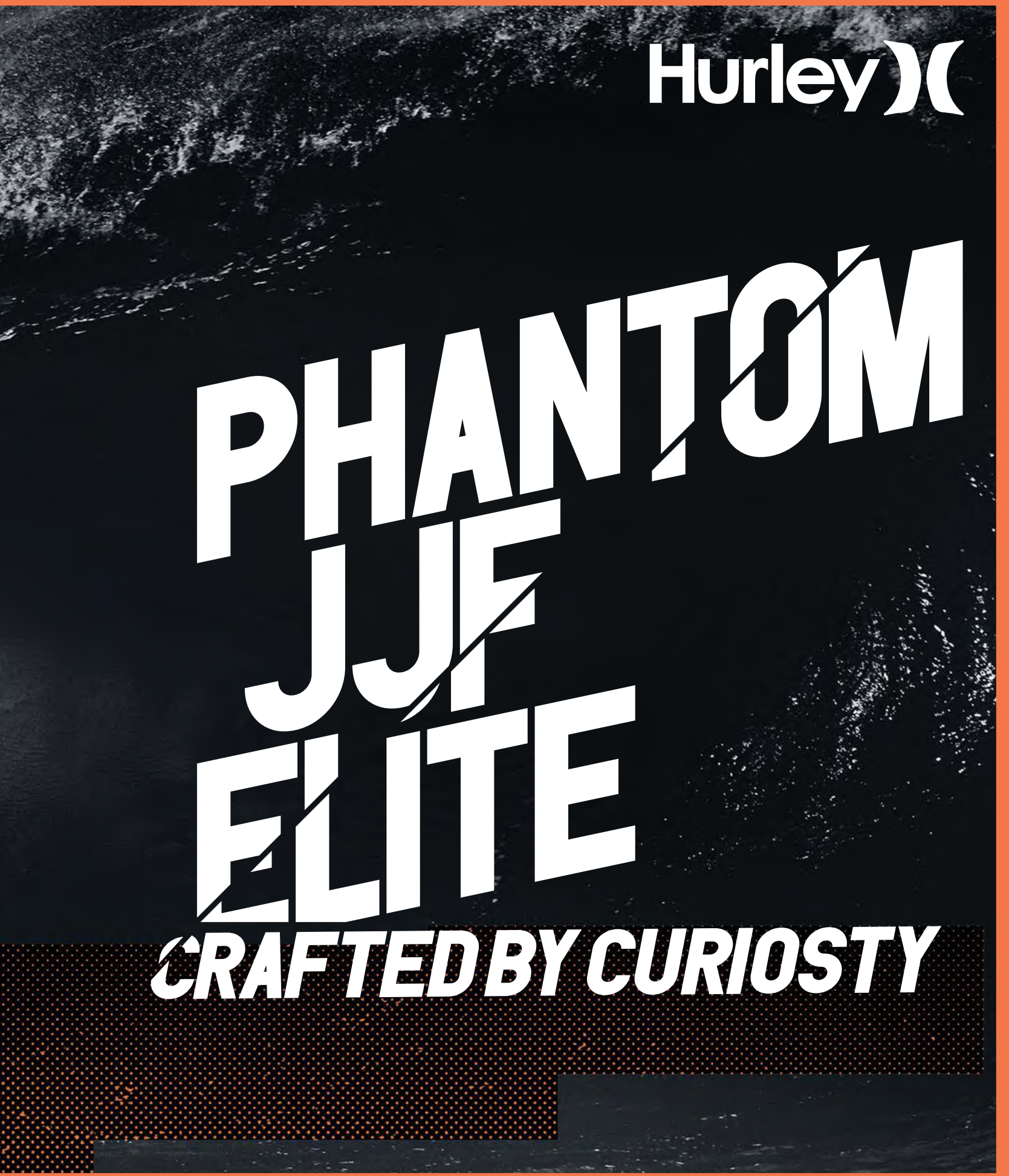
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Fergal Smith, Ireland
Photo by Mickey Smith

Most surfers think they need to travel far and wide, racking up airline miles and baggage fees, to score perfect, uncrowded waves. Fergal Smith, on the other hand, has found incredible waves by going the opposite route. "This wave is an example of why I don't travel anymore," says Smith (pictured here). "I was traveling the world, chasing good waves, but generally I got the best waves at home in Ireland. They don't come all the time, but when they do it's nice to be grounded here, connected with the place I really love. I don't need to go all around the globe looking for those waves. I'll just wait until they arrive."





As inviting as this Réunion Island lineup appears, would you honestly risk life and limb to paddle out? *Photo by Joli*

Punching the Shark

It's twilight and both the sky and water are the same tone of slate gray. The waves are absolutely perfect and you're the only person in the water, which doesn't make much sense, but you don't dwell on it; like I said, it's pumping. But suddenly a large dorsal fin appears in front of you and it all becomes clear. The lineup is empty because this spot is sharky as hell, and now the ocean's apex predator is sniffing your toes.

So what do you do?

Every surfer in history has played out a version of this scenario in their head. When I was a kid, before I knew it was bad luck to discuss such things out loud, I would frequently debate this topic with my friends. Gouging the shark's eyes or using your board as a shield were popular choices. But I always settled on another course of action: I would look that shark right in its soulless black eyes and punch it in the snout. After that, I reasoned, the shark would hightail it back to the murky abyss from whence it came. Heroic, I know.

Recently my stance on shark punching was put to the test. I was surfing a break near San Onofre and had just paddled back into the lineup after a wave when I heard two surfers talking. "We should get out of here," one of them said. "It might come back." This was a troubling conversation to eavesdrop on, to say the least. "Ummm...what are you guys talking about?" I asked the surfer closest to me. "There's a shark out here," he responded. "A great white. Probably just a juvenile, but, you know, why chance it?"

It was a sunny day, there were other surfers in the lineup and tons of people on the beach, and the "apex predator" in question still probably had its baby teeth (if that's a thing). This was the least intimidating setting for a shark encounter you can think of. The two surfers went in, but I stayed out. Sure, I paddled a little closer to the rest of the pack, but I was determined to keep surfing.

A few minutes passed uneventfully and I started to doubt that my two new friends could distinguish between sharks and dolphins. But just then the water started churning about two feet in front of me. When I saw this, I didn't cock my fist back and prepare to throw a haymaker. Instead I froze, grimaced, and may or may not have let out a slight yelp. The boil turned out to just be the water drawing off the bottom, and I was glad, because I'd like my final moments to be a little more dignified.

Turns out it's easy to claim you'd remain composed in sharky waters, but it's much harder once you're actually in those lineups. That's why Dillon Perillo and Brendon Gibbens' trip to Réunion Island for this issue was so incredible (or insane—turn to pg. 60 and judge for yourself). Looking at images of Réunion's perfect waves, many surfers would insist they'd paddle out. But it's much more nerve-racking when you're actually there, passing signs that say "Shark City" on the way to the beach. How Perillo and Gibbens managed to keep their cool is beyond me.

In this issue, you'll also find Laura Enever backing up some bold claims ("Heavy-Water Habits," pg. 76). A lot of surfers will talk a big game when it comes to consequential waves, but when the opportunity to surf heavier fare presents itself, suddenly they don't have the right board, or can't find their wetsuit, or already had plans to go to Bed Bath & Beyond. Enever, on the other hand, said she wanted to chase heavy barrels between World Tour events, and that's exactly what she did.

This is my first issue as editor of SURFER, and I'm tempted to make some bold claims myself. I want to say that this issue marks the beginning of a golden era for SURFER, and that my tenure as editor will be held in such high esteem that wave-sliding androids will refer to it as The Glory Days thousands of years from now. But that might be a bit much. Instead, I'll just say that I hope the stories and images you find in these pages inspire a deeper love for riding waves, regardless of your age or ability level. That, and beware of sharks. Seriously.

Todd Prodanovich, *Editor*


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Volume 56 Number 9 2015

Cover: Torrey Meister, Western Australia. *Photo by Glaser*

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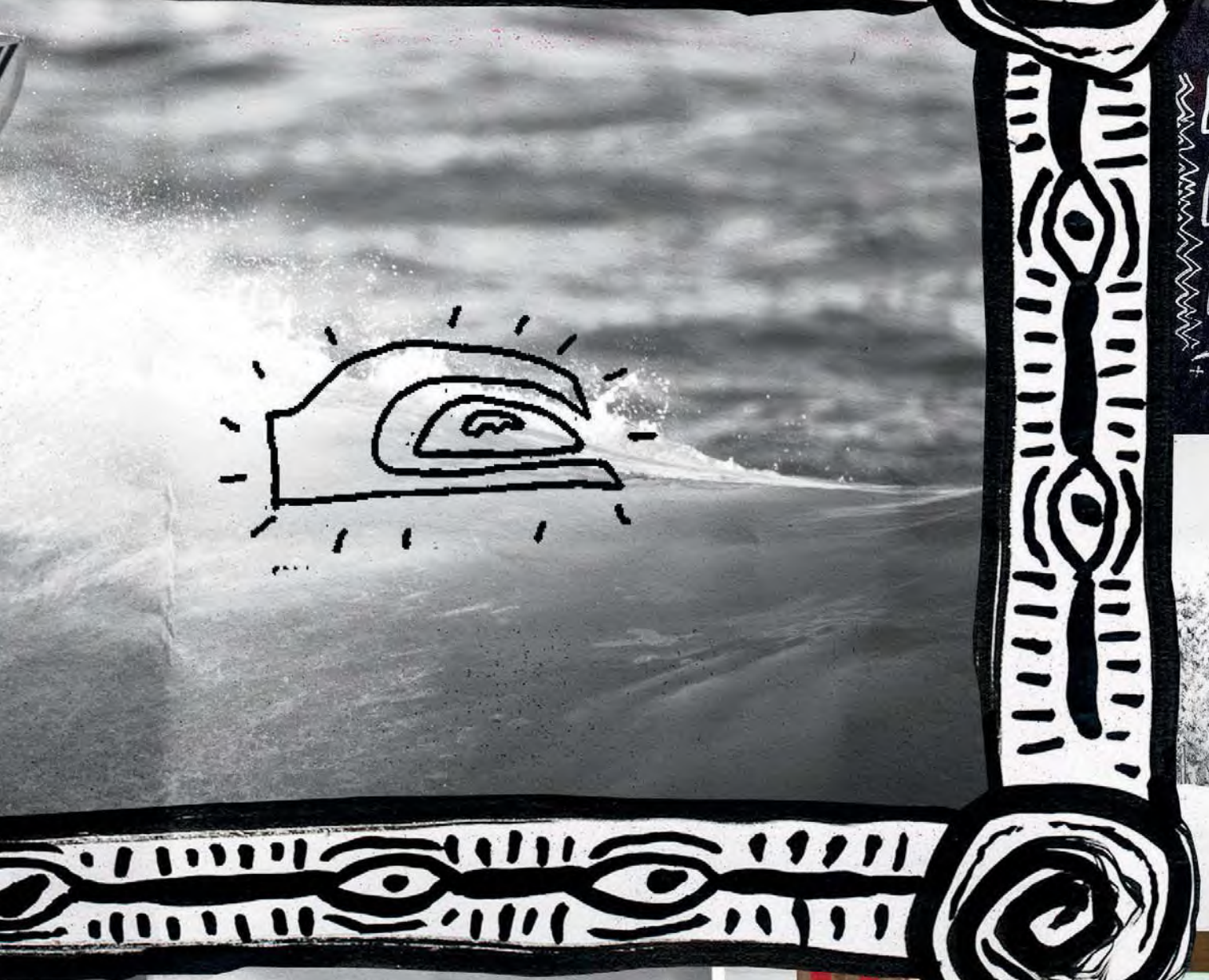












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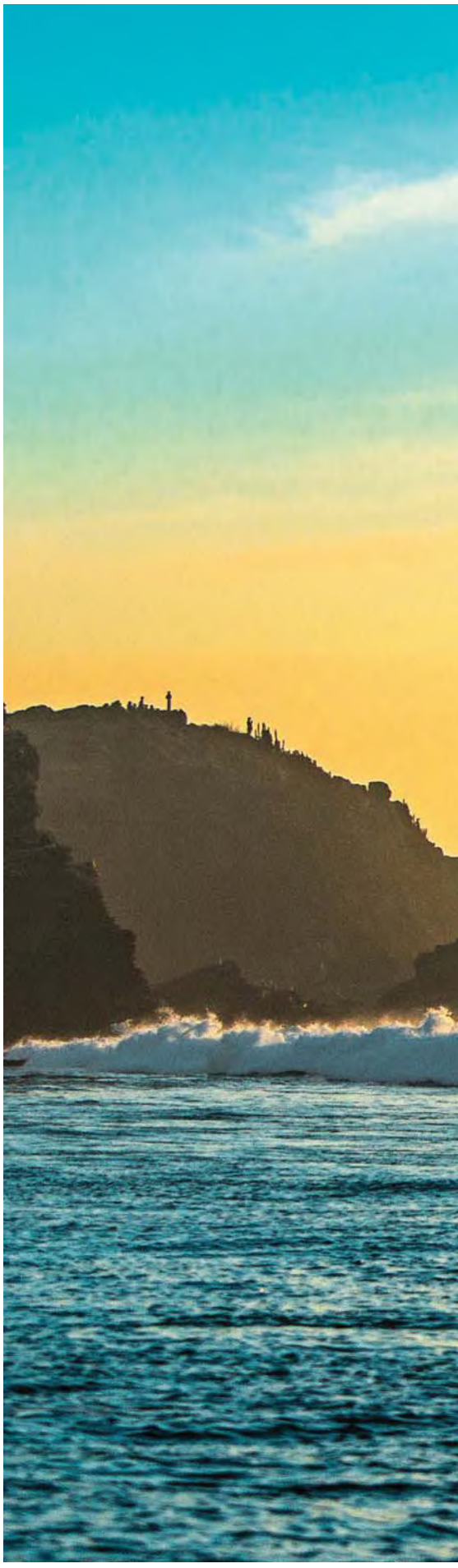


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Left: Ramón Navarro at Lobos, his lifelong home. Below: Ramón paddles back out for one more. “We need to stand up,” he says, “to save some of these special places before they’re gone.” **RODRIGO FARIAS MORENO** © 2015 Patagonia, Inc.




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The Last Best Surfer

By Justin Housman



DRAWING BY JAMES JARVIS

If you're the sort of surfer who takes time to read this magazine and aren't simply flipping through the pages to drool over the photos, then I'm confident I can sketch a spot-on picture of you, dear reader. You're a man, roughly 31 years old. You're a goofyfoot, and you surf twice a week. You first got tubed on a trip to Costa Rica when you were 19. You work as a sales rep for a beer distribution company in Ocean City, New Jersey. You drive a 2009 Subaru Forester (blue; dent in right rear fender), you have an Australian sheepdog called Randy, your favorite band is The Pixies (well, you tell people that, but really it's the Dave Matthews Band), your wife's name is Robin, and she has a double-jointed elbow. Her left.

What? None of that is true, you say? You're actually a 60-year-old woman in San Diego? An 18-year old college kid in Hawaii? A bored truck driver reading an issue you found in a Florida rest stop? Fine. For the purposes of this column, it doesn't actually matter. Regardless of your age, your dog's name, where in the world you surf, or even if you surf, you almost certainly believe that Kelly Slater is the undisputed Greatest Surfer of All Time (trumpet sound). What you might not be aware of, however, is that Kelly Slater will also be the last undisputed Greatest Surfer of All Time. No one after Slater will hold that position again, from now until the sun expands, consuming everything we've ever known. And it has nothing to do with Slater's surfing talent (talented as he certainly is). The culture itself has shifted.

It's worth pointing out just how long Slater has held the GOAT title. Any surfer still breathing has witnessed at least part of Slater's brilliant career. Retired surfers who haven't paid a shred of attention to competitive surfing in years ››

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These reporters clearly know that Kelly Slater is the best surfer in the world. But will anyone ever agree on that title again?
Photo by Glaser

(and have therefore missed out on the joys of WSL-commentary-caused eye rolling) likely remember Slater's ascendance in the early 1990s. Menehune-age fans continue to fight to the death in the Pipeline shorebreak for pieces of Slater's busted boards. Had we not stopped stapling posters into the centerfolds of surf magazines, even cooler-than-thou teenagers in 2015 would be ripping out the Slater pinups and Scotch taping them to their bedroom walls. The point is, no other top-of-the-heap surf god has had Slater's kind of shelf life.

Combine that longevity with the scientifically documented fact that Slater was sent to Earth as a child to avoid the annihilation that doomed his home planet of hyper-advanced surfing beings and you get a level of universal appeal that is never happening again. Ever.

Here's why: There's just too much good surfing today. Too many great surfers in too many places, riding too many different kinds of waves on too many kinds of surfboards for any one of them to capture the public's attention and hold it the way Slater has for the last 20-plus years. The act of surfing has splintered into a million different wave-riding possibilities, all of them thoroughly documented and watchable at any moment with one click on a million different media platforms. Who can possibly process and rank all that surfing anymore?

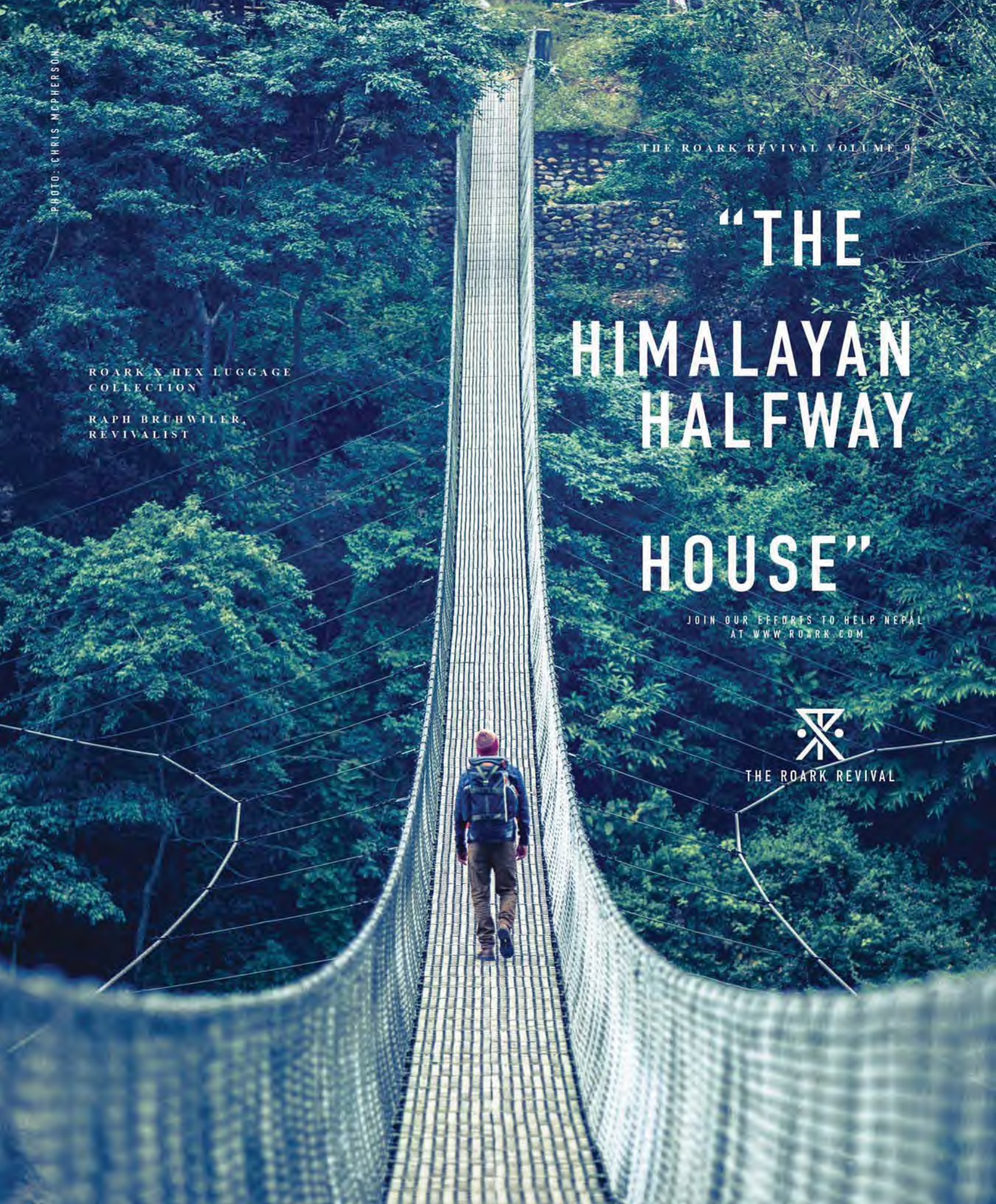
In the years before the Internet—and you may even have the faintest memories of this—mankind often huddled together for warmth in front of the warm glow of a television set, the choices of what to watch limited by the particular benevolence of the network and, later, the cable gods. Magazines were looked to as a source for—believe it or not—cutting-edge news, especially in the surf world. If you wanted to watch a surf movie, and you were anything like me, you and a roommate argued over whose turn it was to scrounge up $1.87, then went to the video-rental place and pawed through grimy videocassette cases, praying that they had the newest *TearDevils* flick.

The limited surf-media bandwidth meant that your surf heroes could only be people you'd seen surf in person, surfers you'd seen surf on VHS, or surfers you'd seen in a magazine. That was pretty much it. It also meant that videographers and magazine editors were effectively curating the selection of surfers who were eligible for superstar status. It was far easier for people to agree that Slater was the best we'd ever seen because, for the most part, we were all watching the same surfers surf at all the same places while riding the same boards. (This doesn't explain the strange coterie of people who claimed that Joe Crimo was the best surfer in the world because he could do shuv-its. Nothing will ever explain those people.)

That kind of media homogeneity is all but gone in today's surf culture, and much of that change is due to an expanded surfboard menu. As recently as the '90s, your choices of a daily driver were just about restricted to 6-foot-plus thrusters or high-performance longboards. Busy lineups these days, however, are likely to include shortboards, SUPs, mid-lengths, old-school single-fin logs, and a few bodysurfers darting around with hand-planes. Plus, each of these different forms of surfcraft has its own websites, video edits, magazines, and cliques, with its own constellation of surf stars and heroes.

And that's without even mentioning the divides in shortboard circles. WSL jocks and pro freesurfing hipsters have their very own hierarchies. The big-wave contingent does too. None of that variety looks to be fading away anytime soon. As the digital media landscape further carves itself into niche-ier and niche-ier slices, there'll be an ever-widening smorgasbord of opinions about the best surfer in the world, and that division makes it almost impossible to imagine a future surf star having the universal appeal of Slater, regardless of his or her talent.

"Few men try for best ever," Richard Ben Kramer once wrote in a profile of baseball great Ted Williams. "And Ted Williams is one of those." Kelly Slater is one of the few who, like Teddy Ballgame, made good on his quest to stand atop the summit of best ever. But Slater did Williams one better. Through longevity, but also sheer historical luck, Slater will never have to climb down to make room for another. He's the last best surfer.


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Richard "Dog" Marsh, Réunion Island

Words by **Matt Warshaw** ***Photo by*** **Rob Gilley**

Réunion Island is the cruelest place in all of surfdom. The tiny Creole-flavored French outpost, 450 miles east of Madagascar, home to less than a million people, has been ripped by 17 shark attacks (seven fatal) in just four years. Swimming and surfing: banned. Tourism, once a thriving sector of the Réunion economy, is bleeding out. The Francophile commitment to biodiversity is the governmental line, but black-ops shark hunting is on the rise.

What a change from 23 years ago, when this very magazine introduced Réunion to its readership as a place that brought "a new dimension to the concept of an island paradise." Saint-Leu, Réunion's hypnotic front-and-center reef-pass wave, was a "hybrid of Restaurants, Tamarin Bay, and Uluwatu." Réunion was a place of dreams. Indeed it was the bright, wiggling spermatozoa that begat the Dream Tour.

The 1990 World Tour was a grindhouse. Twenty-one events. Not a single exotic stop, start to finish. Steamer Lane for the opener, followed by Burleigh and Bells, then—and this is not a typo—13 beachbreak contests in a row. Your local spot was fronted by a stadium-sized parking lot? Chances are there was a 'CT event there in 1990, winding down in crap onshore waves on a Sunday afternoon. Tom Curren swooped on his third world title, but make no mistake, 1990 was mostly a forced march over hot desert sands.

When the Réunion Pro debuted in '91, the surf media seemed mostly baffled. "Why'd it happen?" *Surfing* magazine asked. "Réunion is placed almost exactly on the opposite side of the globe to the U.S. It's the most remote world-title event location in history." The mag wasn't quite able to connect the dots between remoteness and wave quality, but it did allow that the Réunion Pro was "one of the finest contests in ages." Sponsors noticed. G-land was added to the schedule a few years later, then Jeffreys Bay. Throw in Kirra and Pipe, trim the schedule down to 11 events, and bang, there's your 1996 Tour—halfway to the dream. More than half. And Réunion got the ball rolling.

But hold on. Check the fine print. That very first Réunion Pro, in 1991, just a few days before the first heat paddled out, a shark took a local surfer's arm off just above the elbow. Visiting pros, Derek Hynd reported, at first shrugged it off as "Jaws sensationalism." But then a map circulated through the contest site, with little red dots marking off all the shark hits from the past couple of years, and during warm-ups at Saint-Leu on finals day, a big tiger shark flitted through the lineup in full view of contestants and judges. A shadow was cast. A few of the pros, maybe more than a few, were happy to get to the airport. Réunion was beginning to scare them.

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KELLY **SLATER**

Photo by: Kelly Slater

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TRACING THE FUTURE

New motion-tracking device mines the deepest, darkest secrets of your surfing data

By Justin Housman

Big data is all around us. It's lurking over your shoulder even now (don't look). Everything we've ever pointed our cursors at while perusing the Internet is recorded in a quietly humming database somewhere in Silicon Valley. Our phones drop little digital breadcrumbs everywhere we go, leaving a trackable and monetizable GPS trail. And now, for better or worse, depending on your personal threshold of technophilia, every detail about our surfing performance can be recorded, analyzed, archived, and—the holy grail of the Information Age—shared.

TRACE, about the size and shape of a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup, is crammed full of inertial sensors, GPS antennae, gyroscopes, and accelerometers, among other pieces of whiz-bang digital gadgetry. When mounted on a surfboard (though smaller models that can be sunk into a surfboard's deck are soon to be released), TRACE records a surfer's wave count, their down-the-line speed, and the distance covered riding and paddling. While other products on surf-shop shelves can record similar things, TRACE goes a few important steps further: It also counts the number of turns completed, calculates the angle of direction change of each turn, and measures any airs that the light of foot among us can pull off. But TRACE can't be fooled. Tossing your board into the sky immediately after your ride in an attempt to recreate some kind of Noa Deane–esque punt to the heavens will not budge that humiliating "0" in the aerial tally.

Trust me, I tried.

This data, once synced with the TRACE app on a smartphone, appears in an ordered table along with squiggly little lines representing each ride superimposed over a Google Earth image of the lineup. These lines are color-coded to display speed bursts and location of maneuvers. All this info gets updated into the user's "profile," which can be shared and compared with other TRACE users, including pros. Want to surf Lowers, then see how your stats stack up against Conner Coffin? Go foolishly ahead.

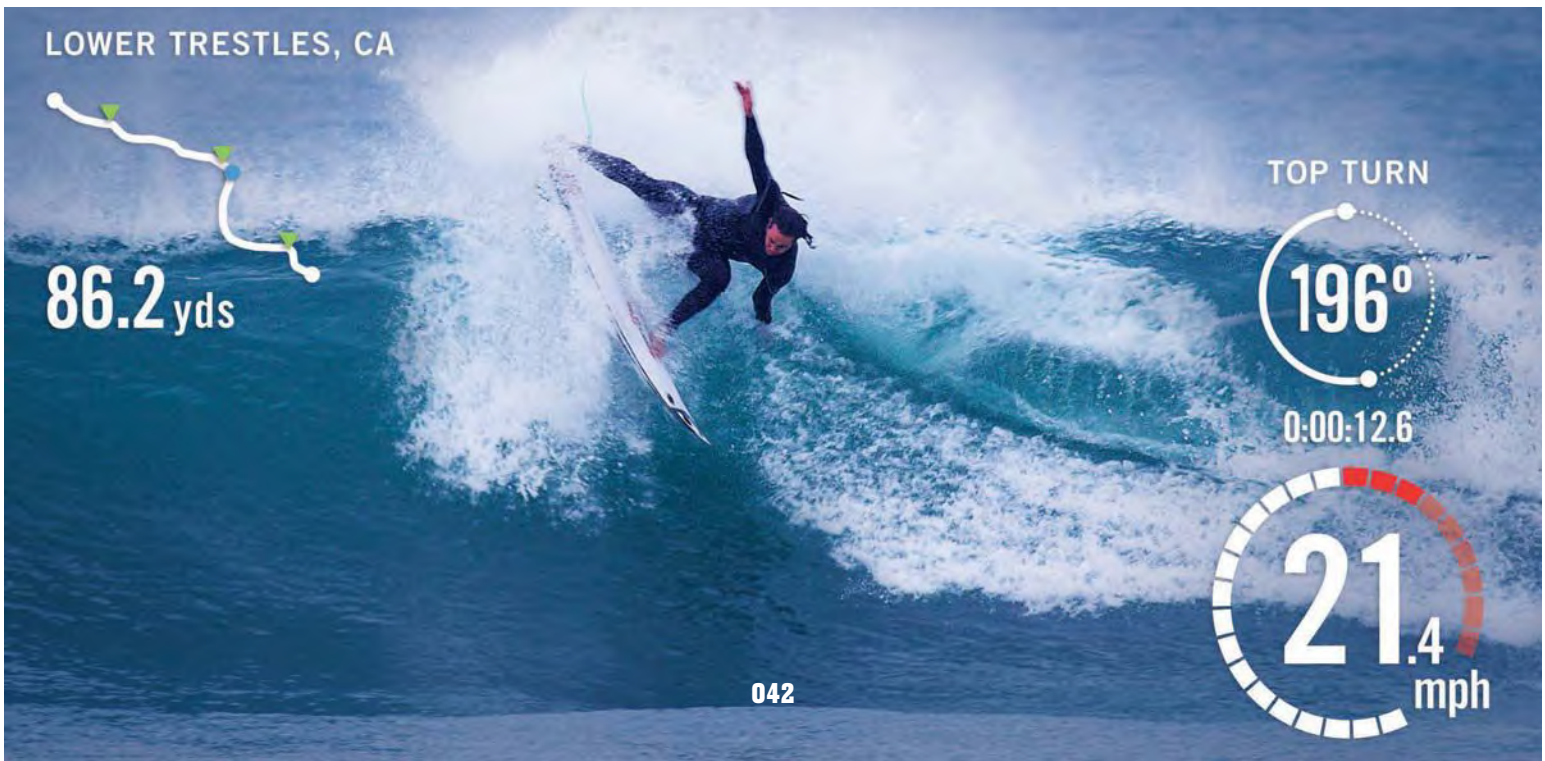
Lucky for me, there are few TRACE users yet in Northern California, so my stats from recent surfs were gloriously free of any envy-inducing comparisons. After a quick lunchtime session in very middling springtime conditions near San Francisco, the TRACE app told me that I'd caught nine waves, done six turns, ridden for 500 yards, paddled for a mile and a half, and burned 350 calories. Forget about the turns—350 calories! That's, what, two beers? Damn. I could have easily paddled around for an hour more and earned another pint or two.

The applications for pro surfing seem pretty obvious. Spend a few days surfing the same break and TRACE can create a heat map that shows where the fastest parts of rides have taken place. Knowing where to sit in tricky lineups like Margaret River would be a game changer for the singlet set. Judges could use the data to more objectively figure out who's burying the most rail, launching the highest airs, and wrapping the sharpest turns. In fact, the Huntington Beach High School surf team just held a contest judged solely with TRACE data. Jordy Smith was so impressed with everything TRACE can do, he's not only a dedicated user, but he recently bought a stake in the company.

Possibly the coolest thing TRACE can do for us regular schlubs is turn big chunks of raw GoPro footage into perfectly edited video-game snippets. Dump all your clips from a TRACE session into the app and it'll isolate the ridden waves, cutting out the time spent paddling or sitting between sets. Then it lays data graphics over the top of a perfectly color-corrected video. All it's missing are the video-game sound effects.

So this is my unsolicited advice to TRACE: Make your product sound like a Super Mario Bros. game. Have the little Reese's Cup play those charming digital chirps so that every time you hit the lip—BLEEP!—or land a floater—BLOOP!—you get an audible zing as a reward. If we're going to bring our surfing into the Digital Age, we may as well go all the way.

Warning: Comparing your TRACE stats to Jordy Smith's is not recommended.
Image: TRACE




futures.
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JOHN JOHN
(145-195 lbs)
NEW
SMALL JOHN
(105-155 lbs)
GROM JOHN
(75-115 lbs)
STANCE
SPY+
PYZEL
FULL-SIZE RANGE COMING THIS FALL
SIGNATURE

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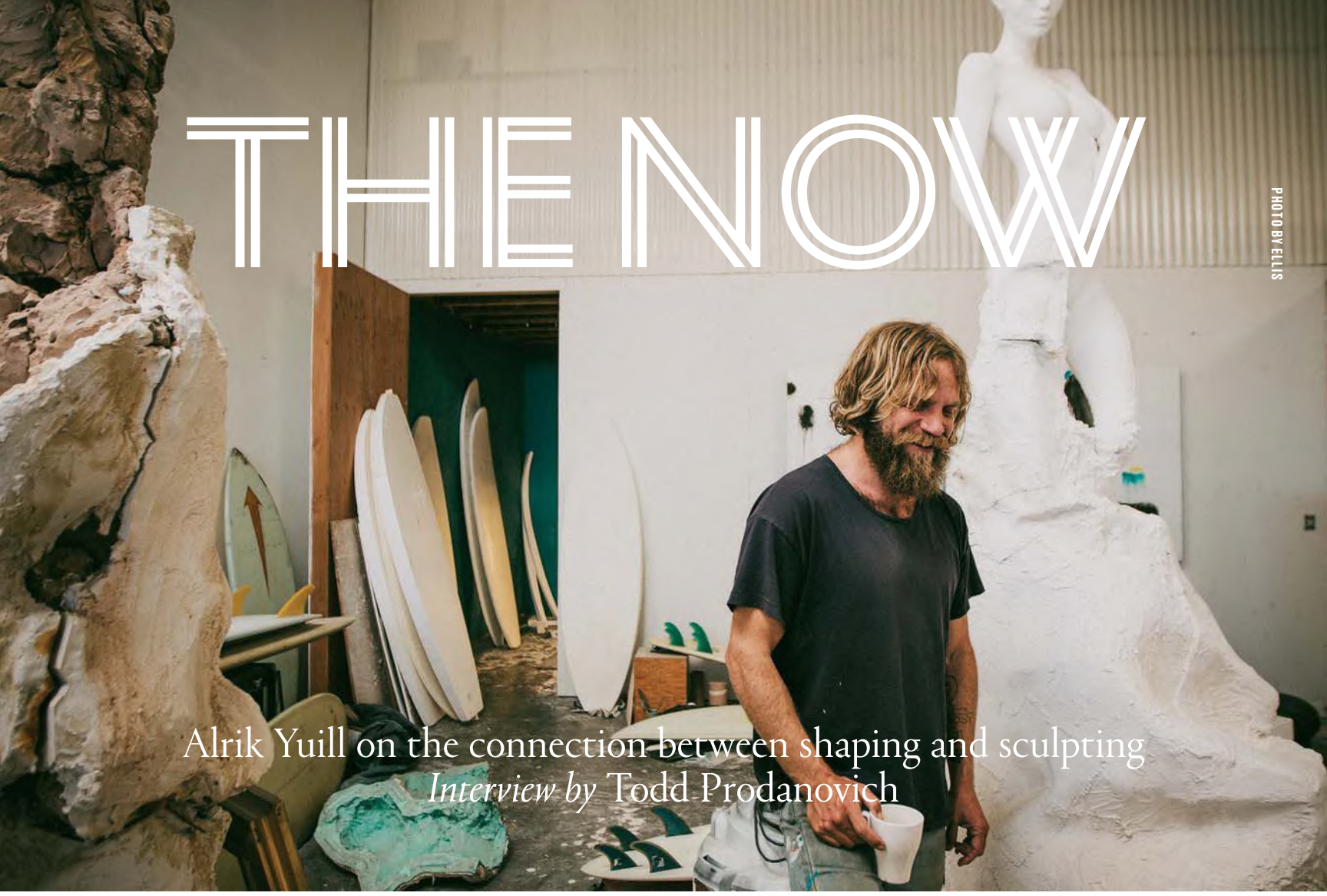


PHOTO BY ELLIS

Alrik Yuill on the connection between shaping and sculpting

Interview by Todd Prodanovich

Alrik Yuill's Costa Mesa, California, studio is practically a piece of art in itself. The floor is a collage of resin, foam dust, plaster, and clay all caked together in a beautiful mess on the concrete. Yuill is accustomed to this kind of disarray, spending nearly all his time in the space working on sculptures or mowing foam in the attached shaping bay. He even sleeps in a loft above the workspace. In the countless hours he spends working on stylized plaster waifs and unconventional hand-shapes, Yuill has developed a knack for using his hands to bring abstract concepts to life.

Which came first: shaping or sculpting?
I've been sculpting since I was 5, I guess. I used to do "sculptures" out of wax at the beach. I would go to the beach with my dad every weekend, and when he surfed, I'd find some wax warmed up from the sun that was nice and malleable. I'd make all kinds of stuff with surf wax. Shaping started a little later. I was making boards down the street at Cordell's when I was 13 or 14, and I did ghost shaping while I was going through art school.

The good thing about your studio is that if you wake up with a good idea for a board, you're only about 20 feet from your shaping bay.
Oh yeah. More often than not, I get an idea around 11 o'clock at night and pop into the shaping bay for a bit. When I'm working on sculptures, half of the work is creative, while the other half is repetitive—like mixing buckets of plastic. During that phase is usually when I come up with ideas for boards, and I'll head into the shaping bay after. I'm not in any hurry with my boards, though. I just like to noodle around on a board for five or six months.

What designs are you most interested in right now?
I've been getting into exploring foils and concaves integrated with unusual flex patterns. All of my recent shapes have been stringerless, so the way the volume gets distributed and where you lay the cloth really affects the flex pattern. I shape with epoxy, which is more sensitive to the flex because they have more buoyancy and faster recoil. I've been focusing on making boards that really give that slingshot feeling.

How do stringerless boards hold up? You aren't breaking them left and right?
No, I actually haven't broken a board in seven years. I've buckled one a little bit, but most of my shapes are thicker and shorter, which helps. I think a lot of breaks and buckles come from too much rigidity, ironically. When you have the cloth and foam bending at one rate and the stringer doing something completely different, there's a conflict between them. I think it's really interesting, and I honestly don't think people are going to be using traditional stringers in a few years, except for aesthetic reasons. Maybe I'm just crazy and on my own, but it doesn't matter. There are no rules when it comes to shaping.

Do you think your shaping and sculpting influence each other?
Yeah, they're so different, but they do kind of complement each other. I get used to looking at curves and the flow of a shape, and that applies to sculpture. Whether you're looking at the rails of a board or the facial features of a sculpture, both require an eye for things that can't really be measured. You're basing a lot of your work on how it all looks and feels.


Channel Islands
SURFBOARDS
OAKLEY
AL MERRICK
SOBE
DAKINE
Seabass | Photo: Sherm
cisurfboards.com





Growing Foam

Are we on the cusp of an algae-based surfboard revolution? *By Justin Housman*

All petroleum is made up of algae (and other micro critters—sorry, not dinosaurs, despite what you may have heard) that's been fossilized and compressed and heated over eons. Once sucked from the earth, petroleum is refined into, among other things, polyurethane (PU), the compound that makes up the foam used in the overwhelming majority of surfboards. PU is great for surfboards, terrible for the environment. But scientists have recently learned how to convert lab-grown algae oil into PU that's far easier on the environment. Algae is grown in big ponds, harvested, then subjected to heat and pressure to cleave its macromolecules into monomers that...look, it's chemistry, it's really complicated. The point is, algae-oil production doesn't create all the toxic byproducts and greenhouse gasses of its fossil-fuel cousins. Plus, the foam made from algae-based PU is biodegradable. And now that foam can be made into surfboards.

Arctic Foam, an Oceanside, California-based blank manufacturer, recently teamed up with scientists at UC San Diego and a commercial algae-oil producer in Northern California called Solazyme to make what they insist is a perfectly viable alternative to traditional PU blanks. Judges at the 2015 Boardroom surfboard expo—a group that included Rob Machado, Greg Long, and Ryan Burch—were so impressed that they voted the algae board Best in Show in the Best Sustainability Advancement category. "PU foam remains the dominant material for surfboard blanks," said Michael Stewart, co-founder of Sustainable Surf. "Any significant improvement to its environmental performance could make a big impact—if widely adopted."

Traditionally, that last part—wide adoption—is the speed bump that slows down sustainable inroads into surfboard production. But Arctic Foam's algae blanks have the horsepower to roll over those bumps unimpeded. First, and probably most important for the surfboard-buying public, is price. "It turns out we can make an algae blank for less than 10 dollars more than a petroleum blank," said Stephen Mayfield, a director of the California Center for Algae Biotechnology at UCSD. "As long as the surfboard industry agrees to pass along this cost without amplifying it, these boards will cost almost exactly the same as a petroleum-based board."

The second advantage algae oil has is its relatively easy scalability. As you likely suspect, scientists didn't start researching algae-oil production because they wanted to build an eco-friendly surfboard. Algae oil is a major player in a race to discover affordable biofuels to wean us off the fossil-fuel teat. Lots of government and private funds are being pumped into labs to turn our little green friends into a cleaner, friendlier petroleum. It just so happened that Mayfield, who was already researching algae oil, is a dedicated surfer. When Arctic Foam starting sniffing around for algae-based PU, Mayfield was just the right surfer-scientist to helm the lab side of the project. And after prepping pond scum to power cars, making a little surfboard foam is nothing.

If all goes according to plan, Arctic Foam is confident that they're less than a year away from producing a significant amount of their blanks from algae foam. The algae oil simply stands in for a petroleum product Arctic already uses in their manufacturing process, so nothing at the factory has to change to put out algae blanks. Plus, early reports claim the foam is high quality enough to satisfy discriminating palates. "The second blank we made from the foam came out perfect," said Marty Gilchrist, head of business development at Arctic Foam. "On top of that, we were able to keep to the aesthetics of our current lineup, avoiding blanks that look like something made out of lawn clippings." This means the same bright-white PU blanks that customers expect and demand.

"In surfing, we are totally connected and immersed in the ocean environment, and yet our connection to that environment is through a piece of plastic made from fossil fuels," said Mayfield. "That is just not right, and we all know it."

Soon enough, that connection might be a lot greener. Literally.

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RESONANT FRAMES

Five surfers discuss the images that have impacted them most



JACKIE DUNN PIPELINE, 1977 [PHOTO: BARBOUR]

"Everything about this photo completely blew my mind the moment I saw it. But as I get older, it only gets more mystic. The way the wave looks is completely out of this world: double-up, super glassy, with a dream roll-in to the back of Emerald City. On top of it all, it's Jackie Dunn! I've always heard my dad speak very highly of him, so he's been one of my heroes for a long time. I also love this photo because you can see where his hand skips off the face of the wave while he draws out the absolute perfect line."

[MASON HO]



CHRISTIAN FLETCHER SALT CREEK, 1989 [PHOTO: SERVAIS]

"This shot is so interesting because it's old as hell—just look at the colors of that wetsuit—yet he's doing an Indy, which was way ahead of its time. Even today, not many people can do straight airs like Christian did them back then: raw, fast, and big. I've always loved those styled-out airs. When you see someone do an air that looks completely different to the way most surfers would approach it, that's when you know they have good style. Fletcher has been a big influence on me and I try to throw a cheeky backside 360 slide or a frontside 270 now and again because of him."

[CHIPPA WILSON]


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Photo: Brent Bielmann


DANGEROUS
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DIVE

"In my opinion, this is the most iconic image of style ever, which is why it's my favorite photo of all time. There isn't a water droplet out of place, and I love the way those classic Hawaiian trade winds are fanning the spray. Because of the beautiful contrast in the image, my guess is that it was taken during afternoon light. Gerry's style and poise look as effortless as it gets, even on a wave that would make others look very much the opposite. Simply put, there isn't a more iconic wave than Pipeline, or a more iconic surfer than Gerry. Maybe Mark Richards, but I've got a goofyfoot bias."

[CRAIG ANDERSON]

GERRY LOPEZ PIPELINE, 1971 [PHOTO: DIVINE]



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ROB MACHADO JEFFREYS BAY, 1998 [PHOTO: SERVAIS]

"There are so many surf photos where the wave or maneuver are just crazy, or over the top, or so over-stimulating that you kind of get numb to them. The photos that really stick in my mind are the awkward moments, because they stand apart and you wonder, 'How the hell did someone get into that position?' This image of Rob at J-Bay is kind of an in-between moment, but it's really interesting-looking. He's just doing a basic turn, but he's going really fast and his body is all twisted up. You almost can't tell which hand is which, or if what looks like his hand is actually his foot. It's very unusual, and I think I can kind of relate to it as a fellow lanky goofyfooter. I also love how clean his track is on the face; it really complements the wave."

[RYAN BURCH]


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"I just remember seeing this when I was a kid and thinking it was as good a barrel as anyone can get—so deep, on such a big wave, and it's Tom Curren! I was so into *Searching for Tom Curren* when I was a kid, and there was something about the fact that he was from California, getting the best Backdoor barrel ever, that was really inspiring. Not to mention his stance on the foam ball is so stylish—just a ninja crouch. I also love the angle, because you can see what's going on in the barrel. If it had been shot straight on, you wouldn't even know what Tom was doing in there. His soul-arch fade when he comes out is so rad too. It's such a strange little celebration—so much character."

[DANE REYNOLDS]

TOM CURREN BACKDOOR, 1995 [PHOTO: GRAMBEAU]



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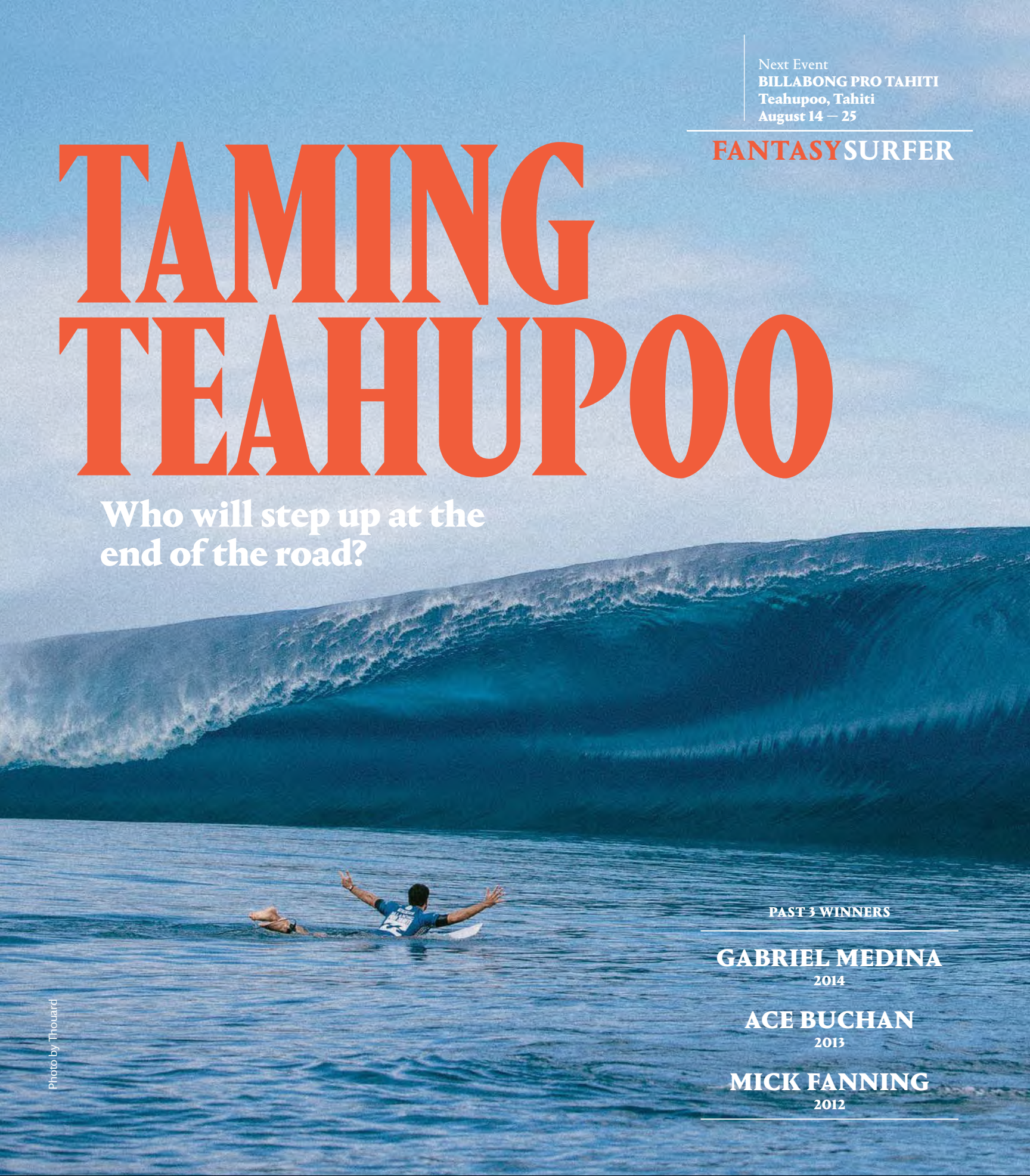


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Surface Tension

Reconciling the perfect waves and terrifying truths of Réunion Island's shark-laden coast

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALAN VAN GYSEN

It was just a few days before our departure to Réunion Island when we heard the news: 13-year-old local surfer Elio Canestri had been fatally attacked by a bull shark on the island's west coast near Saint-Gilles. Every surfer on the island knew Canestri, and the tragedy struck a painful chord within the local surf community. "Elio was one of our best up-and-coming surfers," said fellow Réunion native Jeremy Flores. "Words can't describe how sad and angry I am... It's heartbreaking news."

Canestri's death sent shockwaves throughout the island that were still being felt when I stepped off the plane with California surfer Dillon Perillo and South Africa's Brendon Gibbens. Outside of Roland Garros Airport near Saint-Denis, we bumped into a Réunion local who eyed our board bags incredulously. "You here for surf?" he asked in his thick Réunion-French accent. "Er...yeah," replied Gibbens hesitantly. The man put his hands in front of his face, opening and closing them in the universal symbol of a shark bite.



BRENDON GIBBENS. PHOTO BY VAN GYSEN





I could almost see the blood drain from Gibbens' face as he turned to me. He was silent, but his eyes spoke volumes: "Why did we come here?"

Perhaps the non-refundable tickets had something to do with it. Most surfers would have reconsidered going on a surf trip to Réunion in light of the recent events, but we knew there would be inherent risk even before we booked our flights. We went against the urging of our families and our own better judgment, tricking ourselves into thinking that Réunion's world-class waves were worth the risk, the same way the handful of core locals still rationalizes paddling into those troubled waters.

If you've been following the news in Réunion, you might think that the island is the shark-attack capital of the world. Almost, but not quite. According to the International Shark Attack File, Réunion ranks No. 8 for attack activity between 2005 and 2014. Since 2011, the small Indian Ocean isle has been rocked by 17 shark attacks, almost all involving bull sharks and seven of which have been fatal. That tally doesn't include the sightings, of which there have been many, or the rumors that have been circulating around the island, like the one about the dog playing fetch and being eaten by a bull shark after his owner threw a stick into the water.

We tried to put those stories out of our minds as we headed to the beach at Saint-Pierre for our first session. The wave we came to surf was supposedly the safest on the island, located on Réunion's south coast far from the most recent attack. As an extra precaution, Perillo had painted black stripes on the bottom of his board. He had read about this strategy called biomimicry; it's a kind of pseudo-science that asserts that black stripes on a board will remind sharks of a certain poisonous fish. Perillo didn't need much convincing, and he arrived on the island with a striped quiver. But while striped surfboards may or may not deter sharks, they certainly don't do much to quell anxiety.

"I wasn't really worried about it until we were at the beach about to paddle out," Perillo says.

Left
Réunion Island is festooned with colorful graffiti, but near the beach, street art becomes cautionary.

Right
Gibbens, feeling less motivated to paddle out after catching up on the local news.

Opposite
Dillon Perillo uses the idea of biomimicry as a security blanket. Still, nothing is as comforting as another human being. "I thought that as long as there was one local out there with us, I'd feel fine," says Perillo. "But nobody was in the water."

"Then it was all I could think about—all the attacks and what the likelihood was of that happening to me."

In any other context, the break we surfed would have been dreamy—warm, clear water and an inviting right-hand wedge. But it was hard to focus on the moment and just enjoy the waves for what they were. There was a nagging feeling that we weren't alone in the lineup, and after a short session, we went in.

We were on the lookout for police as we left the beach with surfboards in tow. In July 2013, island authorities enacted a ban on surfing to both protect residents and avoid the negative press and subsequent tourism decline that follow every shark attack. Police will issue a fine of €38 (about $43USD) if you're caught with a surfboard, even going so far as to close beaches entirely to prevent surfing from taking place. The new laws have contributed to the loss of surf tourism on the island, but they haven't stopped locals from surfing, and they haven't stopped the attacks. Most non-surfing residents and government officials see surfing as a reckless act and believe that local surfers should just stay out of the water entirely. But with Réunion's numerous perfect waves, that has proven to be easier said than done.








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Talking with the locals, there is clearly a disconnect between the surfers and the rest of the island's residents. Surfing is seen as a *Zoreil* activity—a term given to non-Réunionese people living on the island, traditionally of European descent. Most Réunion residents have no interest in the ocean, and when debates on how to handle the shark situation arise, they can't rationalize spending government funds to protect activities, like surfing, that they see as expendable—especially when the cost of proposed shark nets, drum lines, shark spotters, and shark-tracking cameras has been estimated at nearly $10 million. But the problem doesn't just affect surfers. Local businesses are suffering from the drop in tourism, and many residents are mobilizing protests via social media and threatening to riot if a solution isn't found soon.

Walking down the street near the perfect left of Saint-Leu, the signs of unrest were everywhere. Large red-and-black images of sharks were spray-painted on corners with messages like "Shark City" and "Shark Area." A nearby billboard displayed a shark's jaws encircled by a stop sign. In the background, Saint-Leu was head-high and reeling with only two people out: one a paddle skier and the other on a SUP. Neither had their arms or legs in the water.

A few blocks back from the beach, we met Davy Stolk, a local surfer and the owner of Davy's Surf Company. The surf shop is an institution of the Réunion surf scene, but, like many businesses in the area, it has struggled in recent years. "Within three months of the 2012 attacks, sales dropped by 50 percent," Stolk said. "It has basically ruined my business. Luckily a friend is helping me out right now, but without his help and my wife's income, I'd have to close my shop."

As we talked in front of his store, Stolk waved to a local carpenter busily working across the street. "He's one of the best surfers around here, but he doesn't surf much anymore," Stolk explained. "That's true for a lot of us."

There was a time not long ago when this coastline was packed with surfers, both locals and tourists. Now it can be hard to find people to surf with. "The locals actually seem grateful that we're here," noted Gibbens after our first surf. At first, the idea of showing up to the beach hoping for a crowd sounded ludicrous, but as our trip wore on, we found ourselves praying for crowded lineups. Each morning, we would call every Réunion surfer we knew to see if they'd join us in the empty lineup. Every surf session would start innocently enough, with fun waves on tap, but it didn't take long for shadows in the water to start playing tricks on the mind. Eventually a sort of mental fatigue set in and we'd be relieved to paddle in.

Opposite
(Clockwise from top left) Warning signs adorn walls surrounding surf breaks.

Ex-surf coach Jeremy Attyasse became a lifeguard after surfing was outlawed.

A Raid Boul graffiti sign in Saint-Pierre. The chameleon represents Réunion Island and the dilemma the government now faces.

Former-Réunion surf champion Sylvain Hoareau.

Unlike many of the local surfers, spear-fishermen still stick to their normal routines inside the mouth of the Saint-Pierre harbor.

South African expat Davey Stolk, standing outside his surf shop in Saint-Leu.

Above
While most traveling surfers pray for empty lineups, Gibbens (pictured here) and Perillo hoped for the contrary.

"It just doesn't feel right out there," said Perillo, back on the beach after a particularly spooky session with just he and Gibbens at Le Jetty in Saint-Pierre. "It goes from super shallow to super deep in just a few feet and all you see is dark blue. Trying to surf when you're looking at that is like trying to read a book on an airplane with major turbulence: You just can't concentrate."

"Well, on the wave it's fine," Gibbens argued. "It's all the mental bullshit between waves that gets to you." As we watched perfect waves rolling through an empty lineup, a cameraman and reporter from a local news station showed up and asked to interview the duo. They had heard we were in town and wanted to ask us a few questions: "Why did you come to Réunion? Why have there been so many attacks? What should be done?" We stared at them blankly, thinking that we could have asked them the same thing.

No one can agree on the right way to handle the island's shark dilemma. After the last incident, many called for culling and pushed for the installation of shark nets and drum lines. Some pointed to the examples set by Australia and South Africa, which have used shark nets to protect beachgoers since the early 1930s and are presently the only two countries still using the highly controversial method. The local government in Réunion is still evaluating nets and drum lines.

Others believe that the shark nets are barbaric. After all, shark nets don't discriminate between species, and other marine animals are often caught in the crossfire. Globally, it is estimated that shark nets have killed more than 45,000 sharks, 6,200 turtles, and 65,000 other various marine animals over the past 30 years, including dolphins, whales, and rays.

To get a better understanding of the situation, I spoke with Dr. Ryan Daly, a surfer and scientist who studies bull sharks and has kept a close eye on the situation in Réunion. "Everyone wants to know why this is happening," said Daly. "I'm not sure if it's a case of increased interactions due to more surfers and more sharks, or a change in shark or ocean-user behavior. It may be due to environmental stress, such as fishing pressure, climate change, pollution, or habitat degradation, that has led to a shift in natural habitat and foraging patterns. We can't be sure."

Daly believes there should be a managed intervention that takes into account the importance of ocean health and user safety. "I'm not sure what the ultimate solution for the Réunion problem is, but I do know that there are alternatives to killing sharks," he explained. "A program like Shark Spotters in Cape Town, South Africa, has worked. And the Sharks Board is testing their electrical repellent in Cape Town as well. I think with more creative thinking and science, there is a viable solution out there. It is possible that by culling sharks we are addressing the short-term problem of localized shark attacks, but in the long run we may be jeopardizing the functionality of our marine ecosystems with all kinds of negative feedback."

Instead of culling, Réunion surfers have invented some creative ways of dealing with their shark problem. Back in 2012, when the situation began to escalate, the Réunion Surf League organized the *vigies requin,* or shark watch, to patrol local lineups during surf sessions. Armed with spear guns and whistles, the *vigies* swim just beyond the impact zone and use their whistles to warn the lineup if they see a shark. Through social media, they notify local surfers when the visibility is good and the conditions are conducive to safer spotting, and what break they'll be patrolling. But when the water is too murky, local surfers are on their own. Such was the case the day Elio Canestri was killed.

Toward the end of our trip, while surfing Le Jetty, Gibbens saw a large shadow move quickly past the nose of his board. In an instant, Gibbens spun around and bolted for shore, likely setting a new record for fastest-ever paddle speed in the process. Back on the beach, he and Perillo debated whether or not Gibbens actually saw what he thought he saw. The ocean is alive in Réunion; it could have been anything. It also could have been nothing. Just then, a three-wave set rolled through the empty lineup, each wave a shimmering image of perfection. Gibbens and Perillo fell silent as they stared out to sea, both wrestling with some very difficult odds.

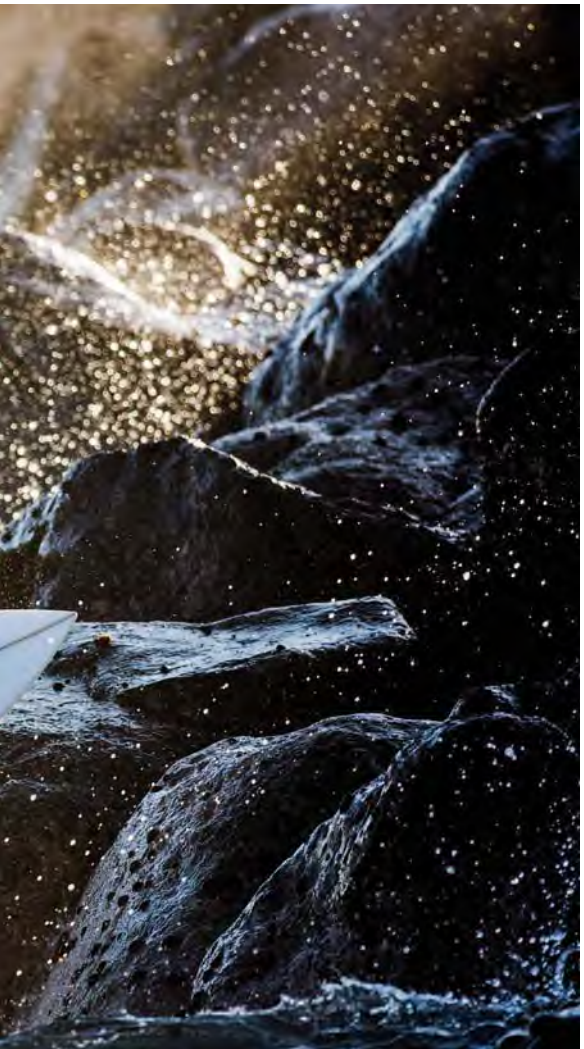
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"We were surfing here mid-day, just Brendon and I, and he swore he saw a shark," says Perillo. Whether or not his mind was playing tricks on him, they both paddled in and played it safe.

Opposite, top
Perillo suppresses thoughts of dorsal fins as he buries rail on his forehand.

Opposite, below
When surfing Réunion Island, going to the air rather than sticking to carves and cutbacks might feel safer, if only momentarily.



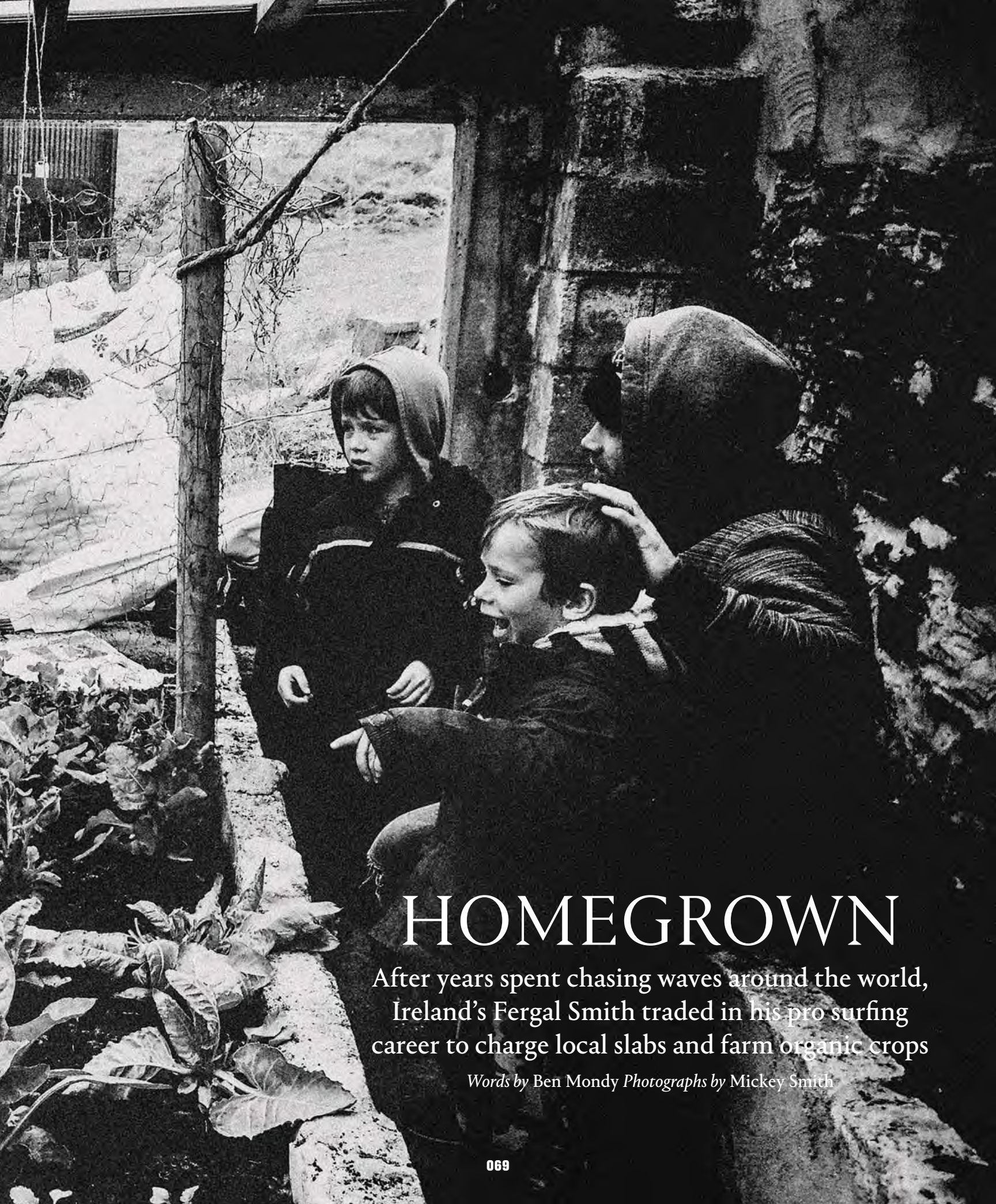





GLOBE
VISTA



(Spread) Irishman and big-wave trailblazer Fergal Smith, teaching friends how to grow broccoli.



HOMEGROWN

After years spent chasing waves around the world, Ireland's Fergal Smith traded in his pro surfing career to charge local slabs and farm organic crops

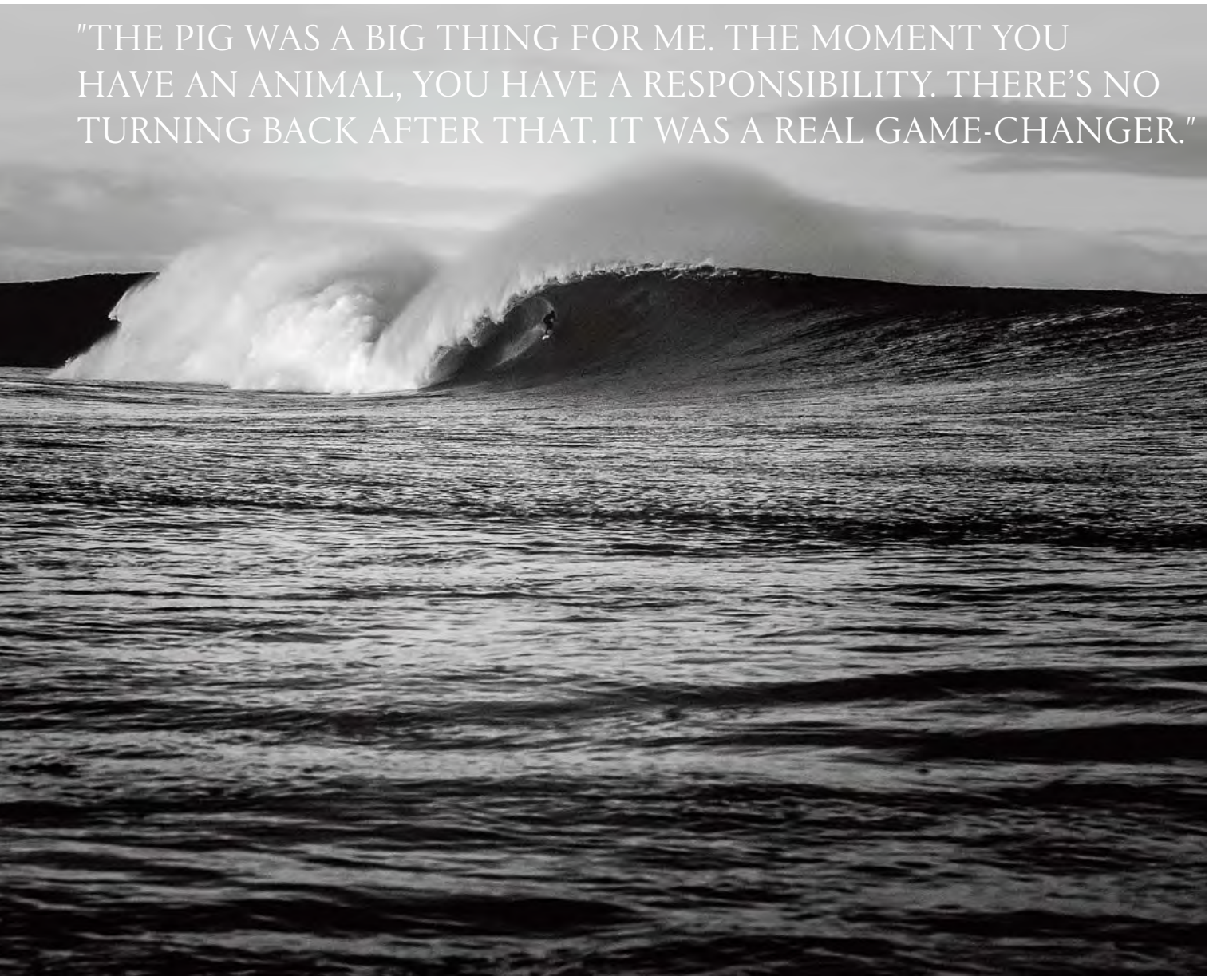
Words by Ben Mondy *Photographs by* Mickey Smith

"We're moving Holly," Fergal Smith said as he climbed into his van, pushing aside tools and a few seed jars to clear a space for me on the passenger side. Behind us, in a trailer hitched to his van, was Holly, a 250-pound pig that grunted happily as the old Ford rumbled into gear. "The pig was a big thing for me," Smith said. "The moment you have an animal, you have a responsibility. There's no turning back after that. It was a real game-changer."

It appeared that much had changed for Smith in recent years. Denim coveralls swamped his slight frame, and a flannel shirt and muddy gumboots rounded out the traditional Irish farmer look. But this was not just a strange new fashion choice. Smith, who was formerly one of Europe's best-paid and most esteemed big-wave surfers, had turned his back on professional surfing to become, of all things, a farmer.

Smith had also picked me up in a van the last time I saw him, back in 2008. It wasn't an old Ford covered in mud and pig shit, however. That van was a shiny black Mercedes covered with energy-drink logos. He was towing a trailer then, too, but instead of Holly, it contained two brand-new Jet Skis. Back then, Smith's life revolved around pioneering huge waves in Ireland and hunting slabs around the world. His fearless approach made waves throughout the surfing world, and sponsorship opportunities followed. At a time when the Irish economy was imploding amid the Great Recession and youth unemployment was at an all-time high, Smith was being paid more money than most young Irishmen could comprehend for doing what he loved. But despite his success, Smith has since stopped chasing waves professionally. Instead he's chasing an idea that's become much more important to him than the next swell.

"THE PIG WAS A BIG THING FOR ME. THE MOMENT YOU HAVE AN ANIMAL, YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY. THERE'S NO TURNING BACK AFTER THAT. IT WAS A REAL GAME-CHANGER."







(Opposite) Smith pioneered the heaviest waves throughout the Land of Éire. He's also bagged some of the heaviest barrels here at Mullaghmore Head. (Above) Although Smith still spends ample time inside the mouth of this menacing slab, lately he's more concerned with the next harvest than the next massive swell.

The day after meeting Holly, I joined Smith and a few of his friends at a small organic farm. It was a typical Irish morning: gray and damp with a biting northwest wind sluicing over the graphite-colored Atlantic. The 1-acre plot, bequeathed to Smith by the owner of a local hotel, lies just south of Lahinch, a rural seaside village on the west coast of Ireland. The town is sustained by agriculture, tourism, and, to a lesser extent, surfing.

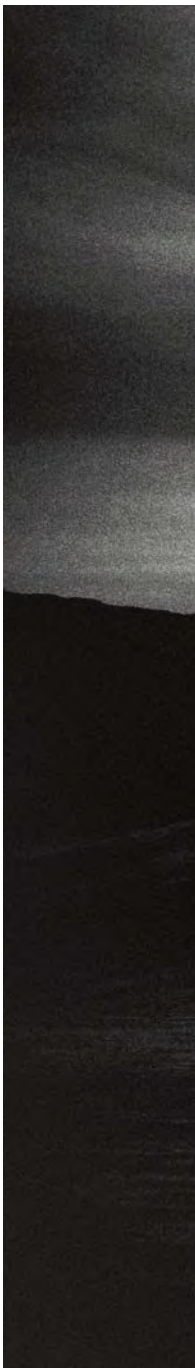
On the farm, our conversation was punctuated by five-minute gaps—the amount of time it took to fill and empty a wheelbarrow of manure into rows of horse-ploughed furrows to fertilize recently planted onions.

"I had an incredible time hunting waves for all those years," Smith confessed while refilling the wheelbarrow. He was referring to a period that began in 2005 when Smith, U.K. surfer Tom Lowe, and photographer Mickey Smith (no relation) formed a trio that was responsible for finding and documenting Ireland's biggest and heaviest waves. That period in Irish surfing could be compared to the uncrowded golden eras of Hawaii in the early '60s, Indonesia in the '70s, or France in the early '80s.

It was during this time that Smith pioneered the big-wave break known as Aileen's, an unforgiving right-hand barrel simply called "The Cliffs" by the locals, as well as a punishing left-breaking slab called Riley's, which is, pound for pound, one of the heaviest waves in the world. In the years since, these spots have become staples for the most elite big-wave riders on the planet, including Shane Dorian, Grant "Twiggy" Baker, and the Long brothers.

After we fertilized the onions, Smith took me to another plot of land not far from the coast. The Moy Community Gardens are perched high on a hill above Lahinch, with views from Liscannor Bay all the way to the towering Cliffs of Moher.





(Above) Smith and his family, sitting outside their home in Lackamore. (Opposite, top) The Smiths, Sam Wilson, and Mitch Corbett enjoying lunch on a recently purchased plot of land. (Opposite, below) He may miss out on swells brewing abroad, but according to Smith, scoring this wave without a soul in sight is equally satisfying.

Centuries before, the plot served as a gibbet, or a place of public execution, and the limp bodies of those who met their grisly end there would hang in metal cages for weeks to serve as a warning to others. Today the cages are long gone; in their place sits a greenhouse full of avocado and peach trees, exotic kiwi fruit, and hundreds of small seedlings.

After Smith showed me around the plot, we made our way to a small table looking out over ordered sections of vegetables, chicken coops, compost heaps, and walking paths that wind down the hill to an amphitheater. Smith filled a kettle from a well at the top of the garden, we sat down for a pot of herbal tea.

Smith explained that he had actually grown up on an organic farm. Just after he was born, his parents moved from inner-city Dublin to the rural western side of Ireland to start new lives as farmers. According to Smith's father, the move wasn't motivated simply by idealism; it seemed like a viable business and a way to escape the city and the stress of his job working for an electronics firm.

Smith's decision to take on the family trade came in 2011 while nursing a knee injury sustained at Teahupoo. He was couch ridden with a lot of time to reflect, and his thoughts eventually turned to his career as a pro surfer. Over the years, Smith had become more conscious of the environment, especially how burning jet fuel to chase swells wasn't doing it any favors. He also liked the idea of spending more time at his home breaks and planting deeper roots in Ireland, both literally and figuratively: "I emailed everyone—all my friends and sponsors—and told them that I was going home to start farming, and that was that."

When Smith first took over the plot south of Lahinch, he invited his friends to help clear the 6-foot-tall brambles clogging the land, but only his girlfriend, Sally, volunteered. The two managed to hack away a 20-foot circular clearing, and to celebrate, they dug a hole, lit a fire, and invited a couple dozen friends over for a communal dinner.

Two years later, the garden stands as a testament to Smith's new commitment. It reignited his love of the land and allowed him to create a vibrant community space. "I spent a lot of time on my own when I was traveling for waves," explained Smith. "I started to wonder who I was helping by flying around the world to surf by myself all the time. I started to crave people and a sense of community."

Smith has stopped flying altogether. He thinks that air travel is one of the modern world's greater environmental sins, and in that regard he has sinned more than most. The former globetrotter hasn't boarded a plane since 2012, and he believes it was one of the easier ways for him to cut down on his own carbon footprint. "I flew to a lot of places and saw a lot of cool things, but surely there should be a limit," Smith said.

Smith's anti-aviation stance is helped by the fact that he doesn't need to travel to score frightening barrels. He lives within a half hour's drive of a variety of heavy world-class waves. Smith rarely misses a swell at home, and with all the time he has logged at the local reefs, he still often finds himself on the wave of the day. And since Smith is no longer surfing for a paycheck, he's loosened up in his approach and expanded his quiver to include everything from twin-fins to bodyboards. "When I go surfing now, I'm skipping down the cliffs to the water with a big smile on my face," Smith told me. "I'm not thinking about camera angles or catching the gnarliest wave I can find; I'm riding something weird and funky and it's a total joy."









"I FEEL CONNECTED TO THIS PLACE. IT'S COUNTRY LIVING, AND YOU MIGHT THINK THAT LIFESTYLE SOUNDS BORING COMPARED TO PROFESSIONAL SURFING, BUT IT'S ACTUALLY A VERY EMPOWERING FEELING TO HELP BUILD A COMMUNITY. PEOPLE CAN RELY ON YOU AND YOU CAN RELY ON THEM. I DIDN'T HAVE THAT BEFORE."



(Opposite) When he's not tending to crops, Smith can often be found at this world-class break not far from his home. (Above) The country life may sound relaxing, but menacing local slabs such as this manage to keep Smith on his toes.

I asked Smith if his world feels smaller now that he isn't constantly on the move. "No, it's the exact opposite," he said. "The more time I spend here, the more I feel connected to this place. It's country living, and you might think that lifestyle sounds boring compared to professional surfing, but it's actually a very empowering feeling to help build a community. People can rely on you and you can rely on them. I didn't have that before."

Just then, as if to prove his point, a local woman in her 50s dropped by the garden to ask a favor of Smith. Her mother had recently passed away and the woman had saved some seeds from her mother's Echinacea plant. She asked Smith if he would plant them in the garden for her. "This is what I mean," Smith said after the woman left. "These people wouldn't be part of my life if I was still traveling for surf."

Between reinvigorating his surfing and growing food for the local community, Smith has found a fulfillment that he never knew while chasing waves around the world. But it's uncharted territory for Smith, and it presents challenges he never faced in surfing.

So far, Smith has used his garden to feed his family and the local community, but for him to be able to continue, farming is going to have to become a business. At the moment, Smith is struggling to figure out a fair price for his locally grown, organic carrots that can still be competitive with the imported fare found in the nearby supermarket.

"I was earning good money as a pro surfer, and I'm not broke yet," Smith explained. "But I've only got another two or three years stretching my money out. That's why I'm so focused on getting it right with the garden. I'll never be making millions from it, but I want to be able to support my family."

Smith's plan is to give farming at least three years and develop a proper business model before his pro-surfing money runs out. "I haven't figured it out yet," Smith said. "But surely growing healthy food for the community has value. How can there be money in selling things like energy drinks, which we don't need, and no money in selling healthy food, which we desperately do need?"

It seems that things have come full circle for Smith, whose dad used to make him park his energy-drink-stickered van around the corner from the family farm because he didn't like the association.

Smith admits that he had no qualms accepting sponsorship money when he was a professional surfer, and says that was a great time in his life. He doesn't have any regrets about his years chasing waves. Without them, he wouldn't have learned to appreciate the things he's found at home and in his garden. "I just weighed the things that were important to me," he explained. "My family, my friends, and growing food. I still love surfing, but now I'm surfing for myself."

We finished our tea in the garden and Smith stood up from the table. He walked over to a nearby wheelbarrow and lifted the handles. It had been a long day, but he still had a lot of work ahead of him. "Look, I'm not sure where all this is headed," Smith said. "It's a whole new way of life for me and it's going to take years of learning. But I've made up my mind and I am ready to work hard for this. In the end, you can only talk about it so much before you just have to do it."



Heavy-Water Habits



When she's not competing in small waves on the World Tour, Laura Enever is on a mission to hunt serious barrels

WORDS BY ASHTYN DOUGLAS
PHOTOS BY SWILLY

You're probably not accustomed to seeing Laura Enever charging solid barrels over shallow reef, but it's a sight you should get used to. Enever loves big waves, and when she's not scrapping for points on the Women's World Tour, she's keeping an eye on any purple blob that pops up on the forecast. Before jetting off on another strike mission, Enever chatted with us about rediscovering her passion for heavy waves, her new reef scars, and why women's competitive surfing could use a few heavier venues.

Tell us about when you started surfing serious waves.
When I was a grom, my brother always dragged me out when the waves were big. He was always pushing me to surf bigger, heavier waves, and if I didn't paddle out, I'd never hear the end of it, so I always did. At the time, I actually thought taking sets on the head was the most fun thing ever. I definitely try to avoid sets on the head these days.

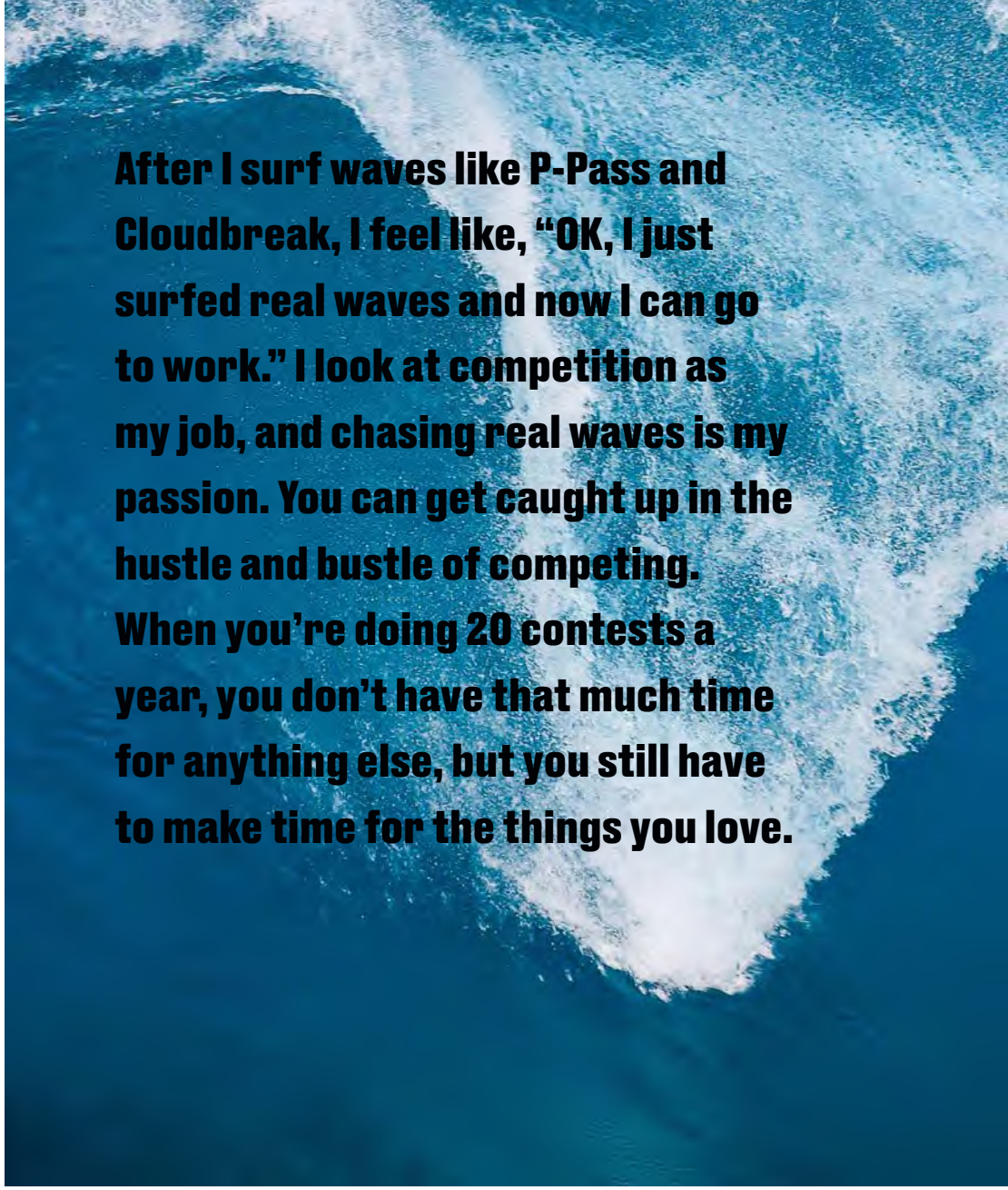
Was this year the first time you surfed P-Pass?
No, I went to P-Pass in 2010 with Stephanie Gilmore and Sally Fitzgibbons. That was the first time I chased a swell there. I got so beat up and I think I only made one wave the whole trip, but I left so damn excited to go on more trips like that.

Why did you wait five years to go back?
I've been competing on the 'QS and the World Tour since then. It's just been full on, and I really haven't had any time to chase real swells like that since. I literally forgot that I loved to do that. So at the start of this year, it was my goal to chase a big swell. When I was in China for a 'QS event, I realized it was going to be pumping over in P-Pass and I jumped on the next flight to Micronesia. I actually got my brother to meet me there with all my guns. I was lucky that worked out, because I only brought a 5'7" to China.

Tell us a little about the trip.
I got there on the afternoon the swell hit, and there was a crew of Australian boys, Alex Gray, and my brother there as well. It was pretty big and I definitely got really smoked on a few. The boys were falling too, but I was the only one that hit the bottom every time, and I couldn't understand why. I was like, "Why does this always have to happen?" I was getting pretty cut up and it got to the point where I'd paddle back out and the boys would be like, "Are you OK? Did you hit the bottom?" I would tell them I didn't and that I was fine. But then they'd say, "You're bleeding, though!" I was trying to brush it off, like, "Oh, how'd that happen?" [Laughs.] I started lying because I didn't want them to worry about me. I've got some pretty epic scars from the trip, but when you finally make one, it's so worth all the beatings.

What was the vibe like out in the lineup?
The boys were so encouraging. They were screaming me into waves and pushing me. A set would come and they would shout, "Laura, you're up." Whether I got totally annihilated or made it, they'd be just as stoked to see me go and have a dig. I love traveling with the boys. If it looked like I wanted to have a dig, they gave me the opportunity to go, and even gave me their waves. It seems like times have changed in that regard.

I heard you charged in Hawaii last season as well.
Just a few times. I stayed at Off The Wall in the Billabong house with Joel Parkinson and the whole Billabong crew. I was the only girl, and they took me out and tried getting me into some waves. I sat out there at Off The Wall one day waiting my turn for like half an hour, and I asked one of the boys, "When a set comes, will you tell me to go? I won't pull back if you tell me to go." When the next wave came, all the boys screamed me into it. That little bit of encouragement was exactly what I needed to get back into surfing those kinds of waves. After Hawaii, I really wanted to start chasing swells again, and that's how P-Pass happened.



After I surf waves like P-Pass and Cloudbreak, I feel like, "OK, I just surfed real waves and now I can go to work." I look at competition as my job, and chasing real waves is my passion. You can get caught up in the hustle and bustle of competing. When you're doing 20 contests a year, you don't have that much time for anything else, but you still have to make time for the things you love.



Above
According to Enever, she didn't mind taking sets on the head as a grommet. Now, after rediscovering her passion for big waves, she tries to elude the lip as much as possible. Especially in pumping P-Pass conditions.

Right
Despite colliding with the reef a few times, Enever was undeterred. "One time she paddled back out with reef cuts, bleeding all over, and was laughing and wanting a bigger set," says Alex Gray, who was at P-Pass that day. "She had the entire lineup screaming her into every wave."







Left
"There was one wave in particular where all of us thought she went into oblivion," says Gray. "But Laura surfed the wave perfectly, wheelied over the foam ball, and got spit out into the channel. Jaws dropped and screams could be heard back to the mainland. Laura's surfing raised the bar that day."

Right
Following the tour de force of Keala Kennelly and Paige Alms, Enever hopes to inspire the next generation of women to become comfortable in waves of consequence.

Below
Enever spends much of her year honing her small-wave game on Tour, but between events she's fully committed to packing cavernous tubes like this one.



Not everyone enjoys putting themselves in sketchy situations like that. What attracts you to waves like P-Pass and Off The Wall?
I think it comes down to the fact that I'm a bit of an adrenaline junky. I love things like skydiving, and I really love surfing bigger waves. I always have, but I guess I just squashed that desire for the last five years so I could compete. It wasn't until I went to Fiji for the World Tour last year, when it was big, that I realized what I'd been missing. It just hit me that I don't surf in waves that I used to love surfing. But I realized that I still loved it. I went back to Fiji this year and got some big surf. I feel like I've completely reinvigorated my surfing and myself, just because I've reconnected with this passion.

You had early exits at Snapper and Bells this year in pretty bad waves. Is it frustrating competing in sub-par conditions when you know you could be scoring somewhere else?
It is, but that's just the way competitions are. After I surf waves like P-Pass and Cloudbreak, I feel like, "OK, I just surfed real waves and now I can go to work." I look at competition as my job, and chasing real waves is my passion. You can get caught up in the hustle and bustle of competing. But don't get me wrong, I love doing that, too, and I want to stay on Tour. That's definitely my priority. But at the same time, I realize I wasn't making the most of my surfing by not letting myself go surf waves of consequence. When you're doing 20 contests a year, you don't have that much time for anything else, but you still have to make time for the things you love.

Maybe the WSL needs to put stops like Teahupoo and Pipe back on the Women's World Tour again.
Yeah, I think they should. The girls definitely have the talent to handle it. I loved watching the previous generation when the girls used to have 'CT events at Teahupoo, because they absolutely charged. They put everything into it. More recently, it's amazing to see Keala Kennelly charging and Paige Alms getting barreled at Jaws. I'm really inspired by those girls and I'd love to be able to do that as well. But right now, because we have so many events that are not in waves of consequence, a lot of the girls are like I was. I didn't surf a barreling wave for four years of my life. I didn't get barreled for four years because I was a contest robot just surfing 2-foot beachies everywhere. It's hard to hone those skills if you're not getting the opportunity to surf serious waves. But if we were given the chance, the new generation of girls on Tour would definitely give it a crack.

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NOLAN HALL



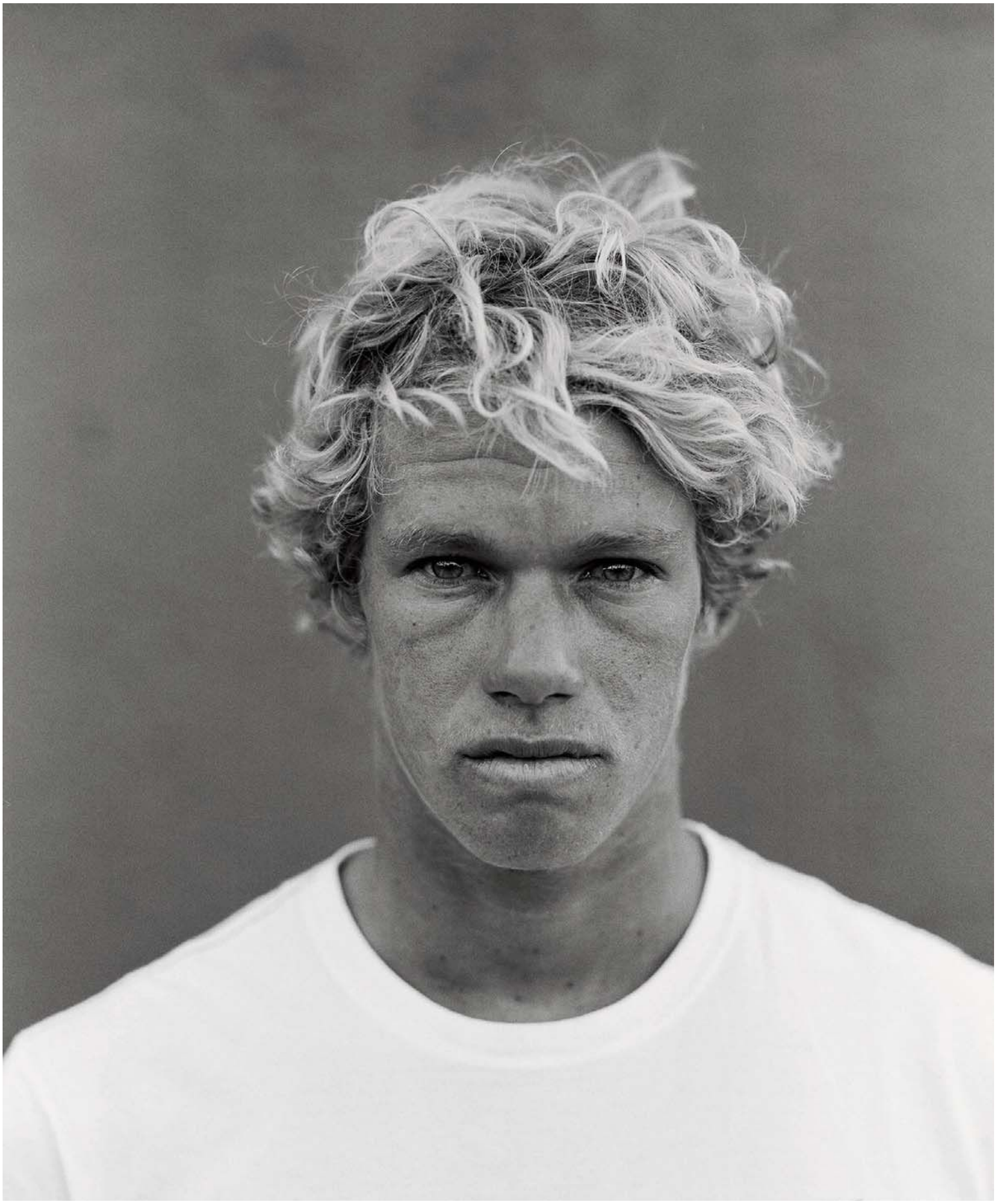
Photographer Nolan Hall grew up at Capistrano Beach, California. As a kid, he slid waves up and down the Orange County coast with style masters Alex Knost, Tyler Warren, and Robbie Kegel—though not quite as well as Alex Knost, Tyler Warren, or Robbie Kegel, so his career traversed a different path. Hall's dad gave him an old Nikon shooter when he was a teenager and he's been snapping shutters ever since. His day job is wrangling the Vans surf team all over the world, a colorful crew that overflows with both inspiration and subject matter. Hall is also a card-carrying member of the Deadbeat Club, the painfully cool zine-printing artist collective helmed by Ed Templeton. Hall shoots on film, mostly black-and-whites, though with an occasional splash of color. His candid, unfussy lifestyle shots are photographic backstage passes; you might find Nathan Fletcher in an unguarded moment with his son on the North Shore, or even Joel Tudor flashing Wu-Tang hand signs in the lush backyard of the Pipeline house.

List of Works

082 Ford Archbold, Hossegor, France, 2012
083 Alex Knost & Ellis Ericson, California, 2012
084 Dylan Rieder, North Shore, Oahu, 2014
085 John Florence, Costa Mesa, California, 2013
086 Josh Mulcoy, Yakutat, Alaska, 2014
087 Nathan Florence, Yakutat, Alaska, 2014
088 Chad & Trace Marshall, Port Aransas, Texas, 2014
089 Nathan Fletcher, Pascuales, Mexico, 2014


CHEVROLET













Out West

Scenes from the rugged coast of Western Australia





Western Australia offers an array of waves catering to both tube-hounds and aerialists alike, which is why surfers will travel across the globe to sample what the rugged coast has on tap. California's Nate Yeomans, with thousands of miles behind him and just a few more to go. *Photo by Glaser*







(Above) Timmy Reyes, Cory Lopez, and Ian Crane. (Below) Checking the surf in Western Australia often requires long hikes. But when they lead to picture-perfect waves and howling offshore winds, you really can't complain. (Opposite) Gas Bay is primarily a long right-hander, but goofyfooters like North Carolina's Brett Barley tend to opt for the shorter and hollower left. "Everyone was going right, so we were hunting the lefts and trading pits all morning," says Barley. "But it was sketchy thinking about all the sharks out there. We spotted multiple great whites, and a couple guys got chased out. The waves are so enticing there, but the wildlife is not." *Photos by Glaser*





(Opposite) The night before this shot was taken, Jordy Smith was surfing solo when a great white swam toward him and dove under his board. "It was a really weird session, as is every session in West Oz," says Smith. "But the light was amazing, so I paddled out again and caught a bunch of really fun waves." *Photo by Glaser* (Top) Jack Robinson, utilizing the afternoon south winds. *Photo by Bielmann* (Bottom) Cory Lopez and Timmy Reyes, en route to The Box. *Photo By Glaser*









In terms of climate and weather, Western Australia is comparable to Southern California. Winds howl offshore in the morning and switch onshore in the afternoon, offering either clean barrels or air sections depending on when you get to the beach. On this day, Cory Lopez was glad he set an alarm. *Photo by Glaser*







(Opposite) "This wave is really shallow," says Torrey Meister of this windswept ramp. "You basically just throw yourself into the wind and land on dry reef. If you fall, you're going to hit the rocks. My wetsuit was all torn up by the end of the trip." (Top) Nate Yeomans, mind-surfing the first set of the morning. (Bottom) Western Australia is a dangerous coast for surfers, and even more so for stick figures. *Photos by Glaser*



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TASMANIA
Photo by Andrew Chisholm

"In Tasmania, the weather is usually horrible this time of year, with rain, squalls, and snow on the higher peaks," says photographer Andrew Chisholm. "But this day in particular was sunny and fairly warm. This wave sits just outside of Hobart in a series of seven points that sweep inside a large bay. They're all amazing waves on the right conditions, and when you fly into the local airport, you can actually see them all firing at once if you time it right."







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REDirect Surf is a competition to see who can create the most unique short surf film of the year. We sent the best surf filmmakers out on the road with the best cameras, and they came back with pure gold (see for yourself at **Surfermag.com/REDirect**). In August, a panel of judges will decide which filmmaker gets to keep the grand prize, a RED Epic Dragon camera worth $50K. But just before that, we're opening the ballot in the name of democracy for a SURFER Fan Favorite award.

Head to **Surfermag.com/REDirect-vote** the week of July 27 to see how the 11 clips stack up against each other, then pick your favorite—John John Florence, Dylan Graves, Josh Kerr, and more in a good ol' fashioned popularity contest. Who do you think will win?

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Match the WSL commentator to their context-free quote

A Joe Turpel



B Ross Williams



C Martin Potter



1. "That speed he carries allows him to get a little bit groovy."
2. "He's gonna open his account with this one."
3. "He is a cheeky little hyena."
4. "He just got gobbled up by the tube monster."
5. "You get back in the corner and just poke it in there."
6. "The swell is meaty. Not meteor, meaty. Like... thick."

D Peter Mel



E Ronnie Blakey



F Strider Wasilewski



ART BY PHIL ROBERTS

Answers: 1.A, 2.C, 3.E, 4.B, 5.F, 6.D

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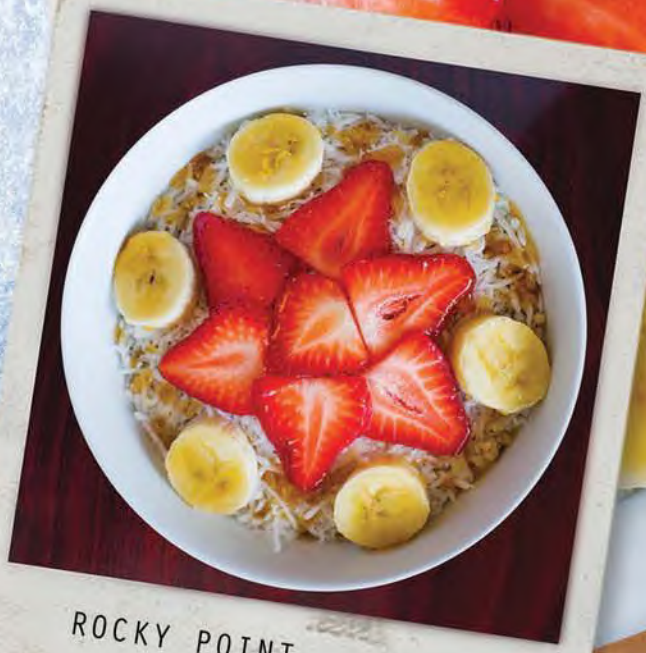
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